June Talks Bring President And Fulbright Back Together

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June has finally brought a thaw to the chilly relations between President Johnson and Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.).

The long cool spell set in last September when Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, criticized U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic.

But Fulbright met privately with the President on June 1. Since then he has had two other White House meetings—attending the White House reception for presidential scholars last Tuesday and a meeting of Senate committee chairmen with the President on Thursday.

One Senator who attended the latter meeting reported that "Johnson and Fulbright had a most cordial discussion. They seem to be on most excellent terms. Even on Vietnam, the sharpness has ameliorated."

Before the June 1 meeting betwen the two, Fulbright had not talked alone with the President for several months. Earlier this year, Fulbright confirmed that his attempts to explain his foreign policy views to the President by letter had met with a "somewhat formal" response.

The distance between the two had grown even more apparent in recent months. Fulbright, who originally supported the Administration on Vietnam, used public hearings by the Foreign Relations Committee as a vehicle to express his mounting discontent with Vietnam policy.

On several occasions, the President indicated his displeasure with Fulbright and what he called "nervous Nellies." On May 11, Mr. Johnson devoted a speech at Princeton University to challenging Fulbright's "Arrogance of Power" lectures.

On May 12, the President gave an acid speech at a Democratic dinner in Washington, with Fulbright present at the head table.

In recent weeks, the Fulbright Committee has put special pressure on the Administration by cutting and changing the foreign aid bill. Some Senate sources believe that the June 1 meeting between the President and Fulbright was motivated by the President's desire to forestall further drastic changes in the bill. Yesterday, Fulbright confirmed that foreign aid was one of the subjects he had discussed with the President.